

A Web of Networks, an Abundance of Services

A global thicket of information known as the Internet.

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1970's, in which thousands of users can connect simultaneously by telephone to a central system that dispenses electronic information. And that technology has drawbacks: the systems can become congested, and for the most part customers have limited options.

In sharp contrast is the Internet, a collection of computer networks that does a little of what a national data highway would do and that already has hundreds of thousands of computer users.

The Internet is a web of networks with shared software standards, allowing users on one network to reach anywhere into a global thicket. Created by the Pentagon, the Internet was originally limited to academic and corporate researchers and government officials. It began as a simple mechanism for sharing data, using remote computers and exchanging electronic mail. Now it contains large and small, commercial and nonprofit networks that offer a remarkable array of services.

Many companies both small and large

have found that using the Internet is good business.

At the low end, a small business could use the Internet for an electronic mailbox that could be called each day for messages. Using services like the Well, of Sausalito, Calif., or the World Software Tool and Die, of Brookline, Mass., a company can explore the Internet without running up a big bill. Customers dial these services much like they would a bulletin board. The difference is that the Unix-based computers of the Well and World Software can easily climb throughout the Internet.

Providing slightly more sophisticated service are companies like Performance Systems International Inc., of Reston, Va., which have broader networks. These services are available in most large cities by dialing a local number.

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A larger company might be looking for a relatively inexpensive way to hook up various offices to share data. Cygnus Support Inc., a software company in Mountain View, Calif., uses the Internet to link with its Cambridge, Mass., office and trade information on software development projects.

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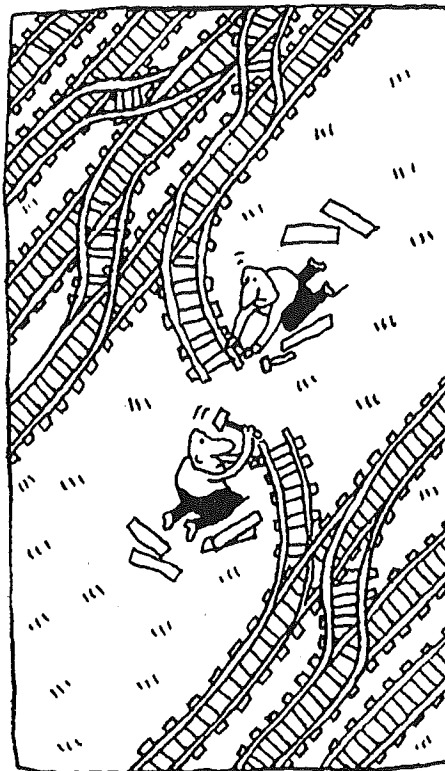
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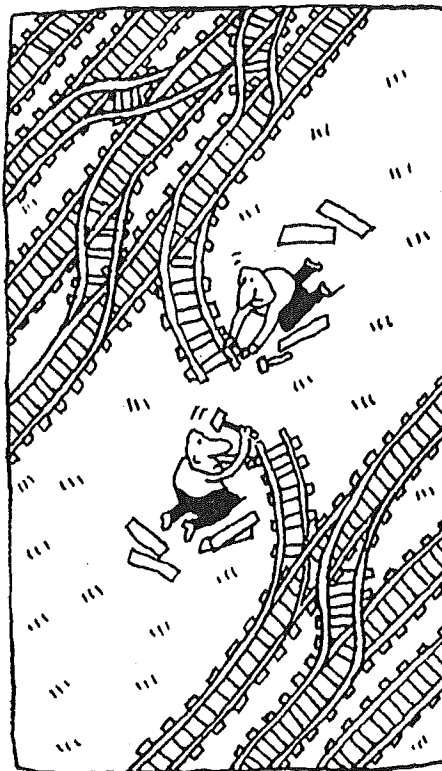
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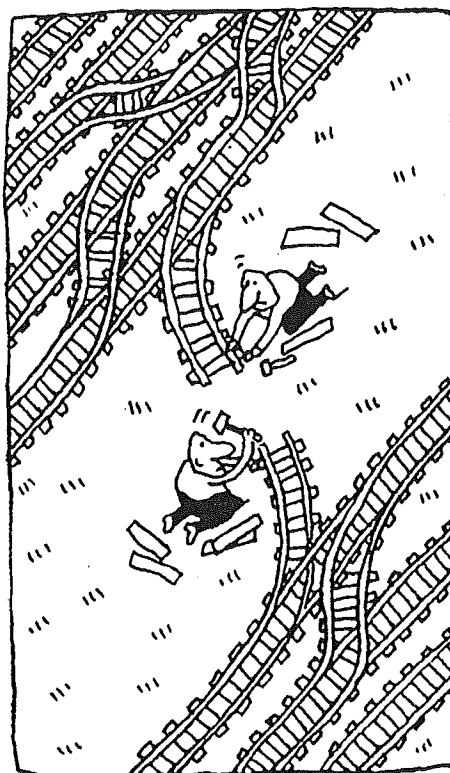
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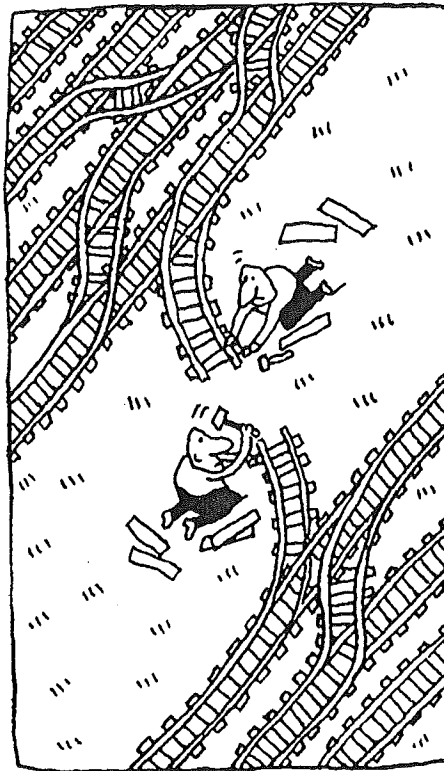
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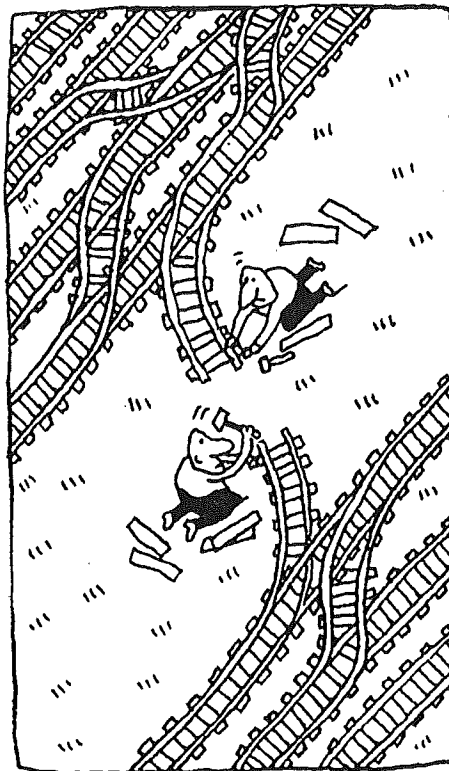
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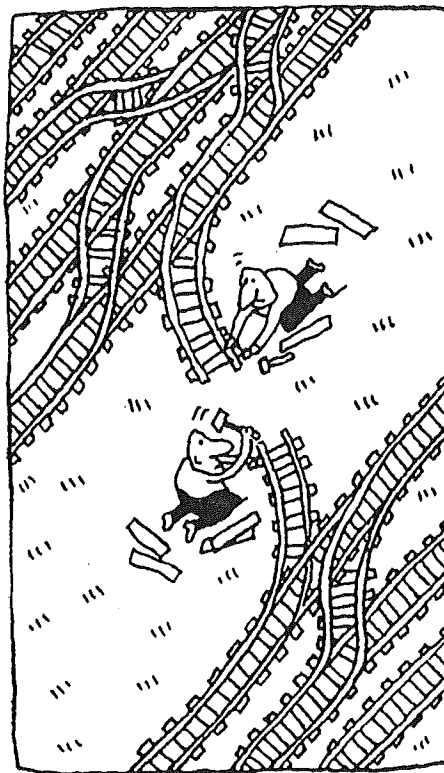
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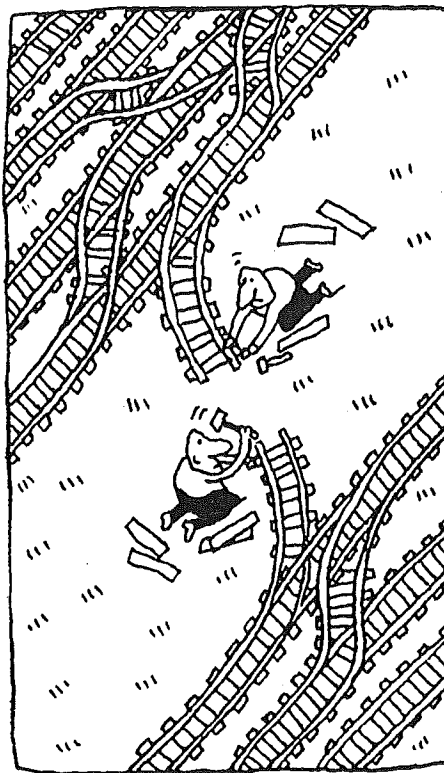
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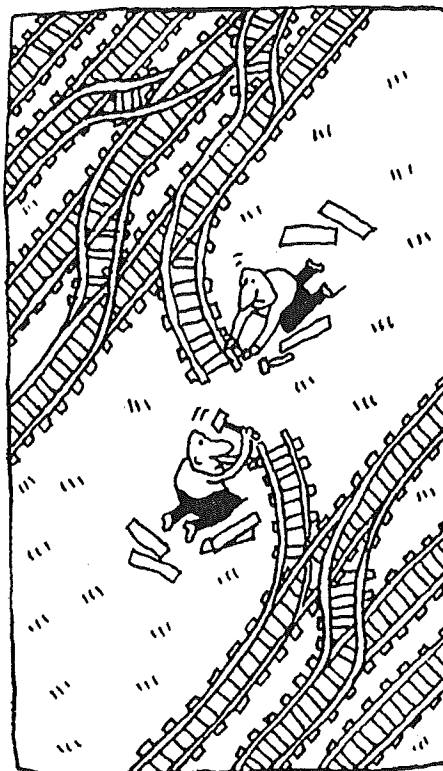
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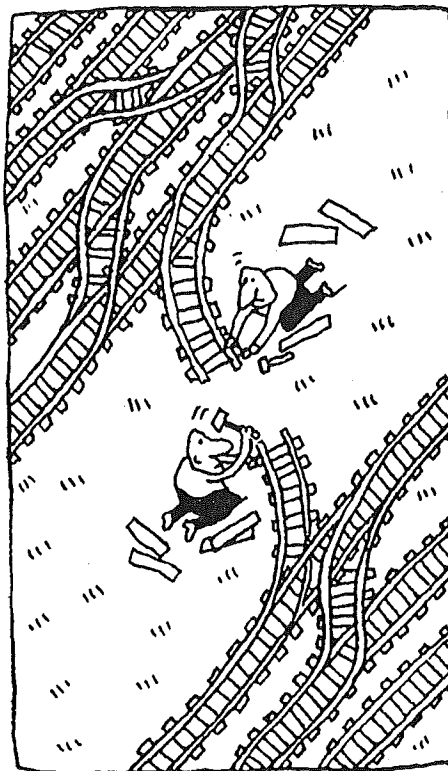
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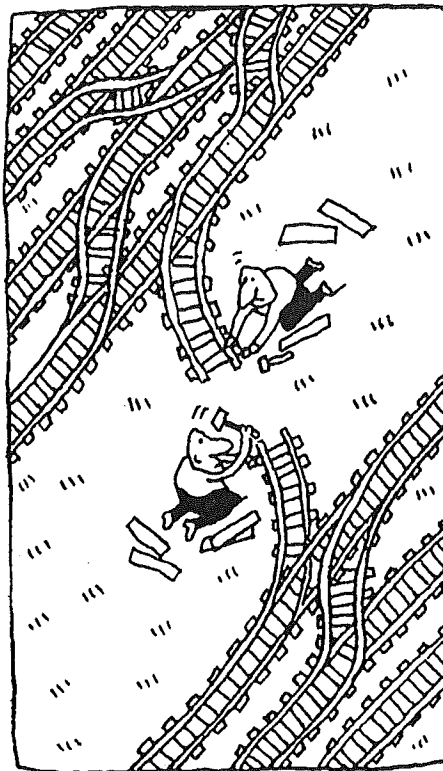
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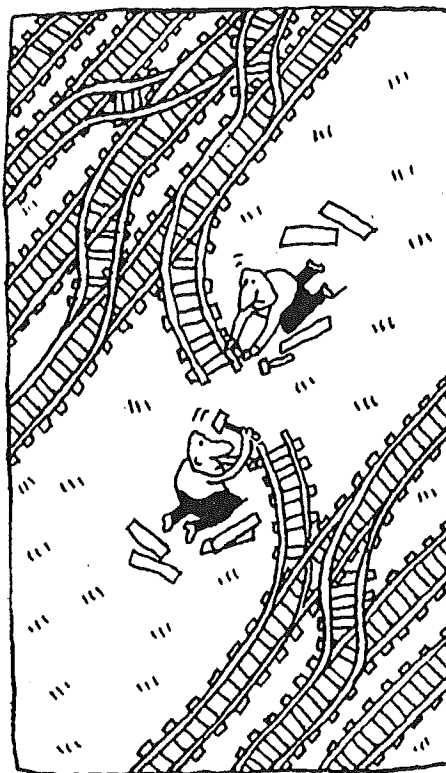
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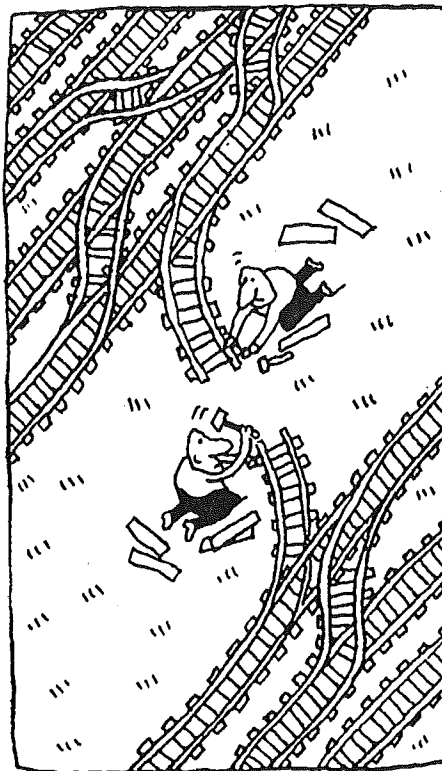
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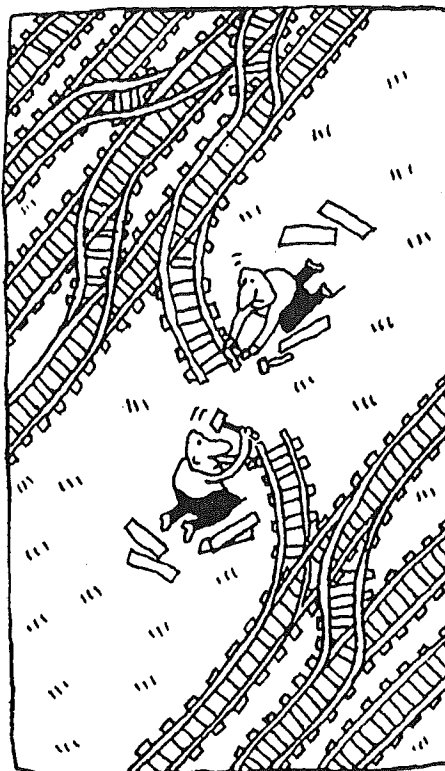
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The Executive Computer/John Markoff

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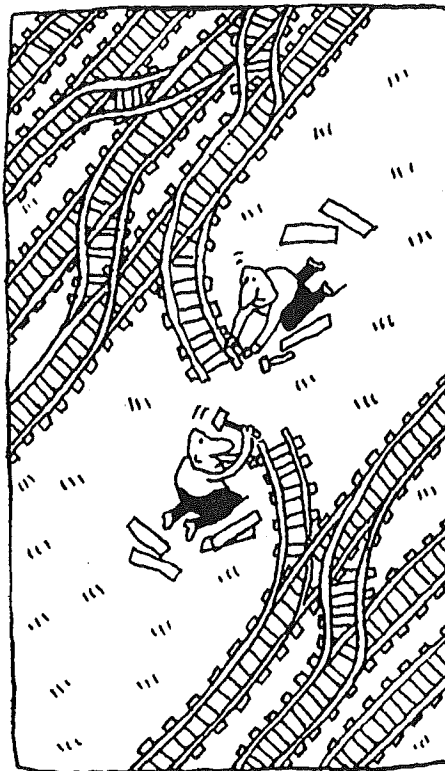
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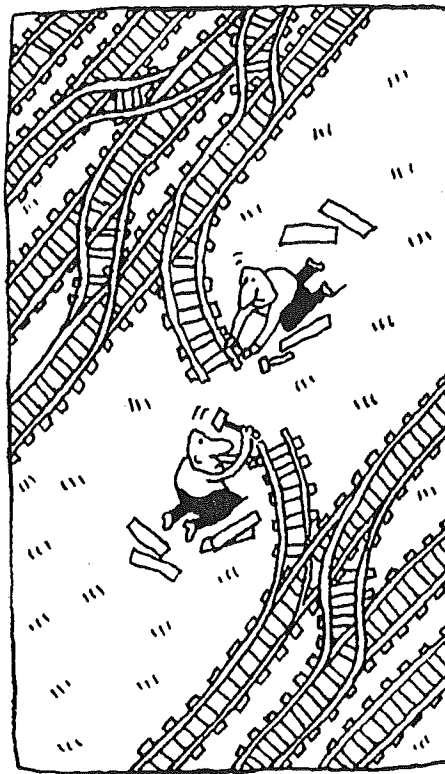
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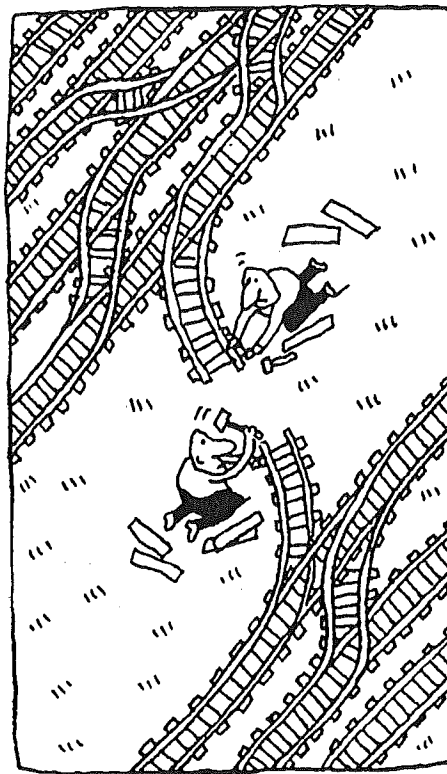
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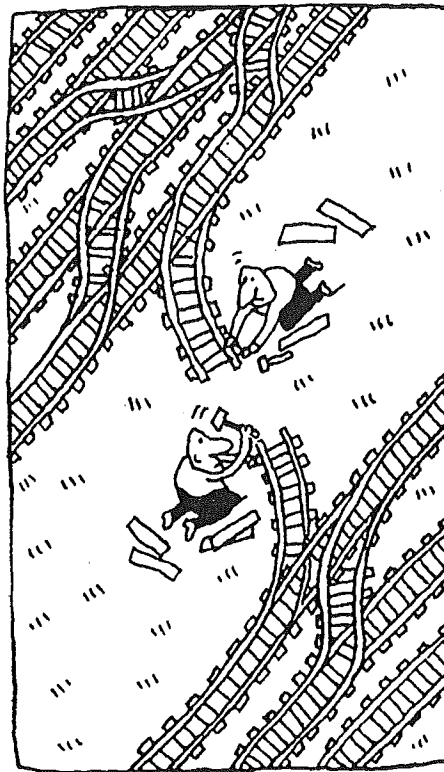
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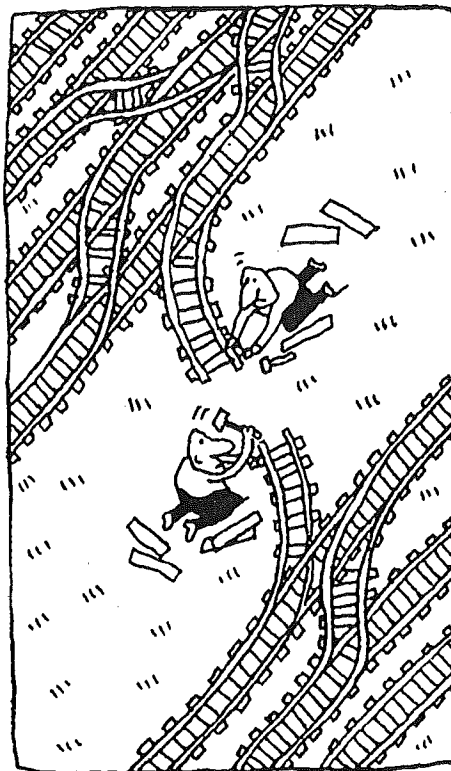
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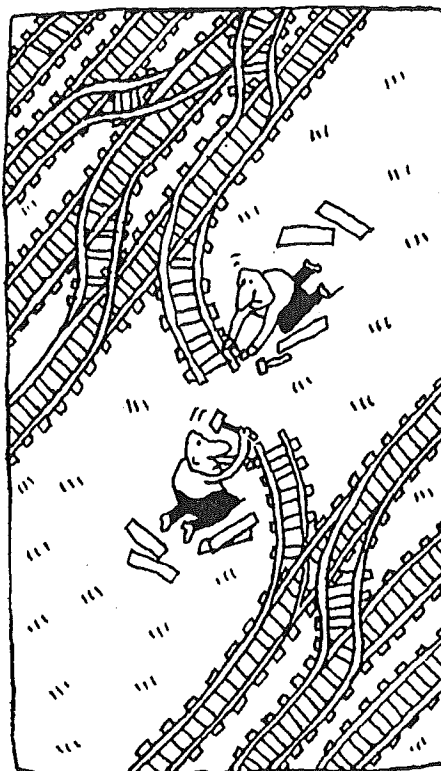
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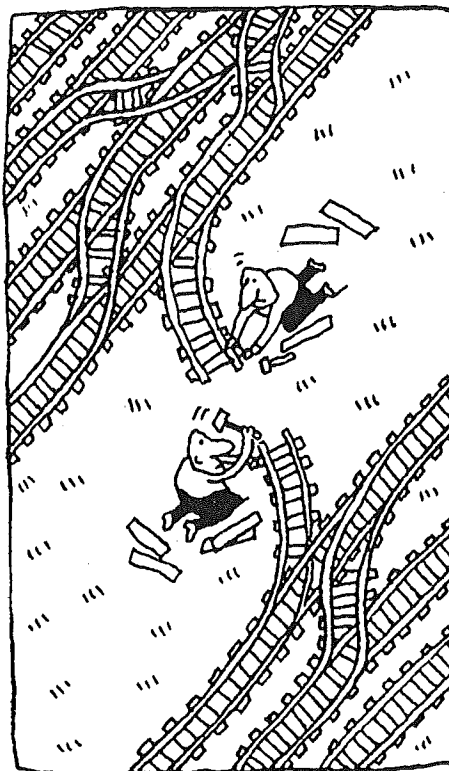
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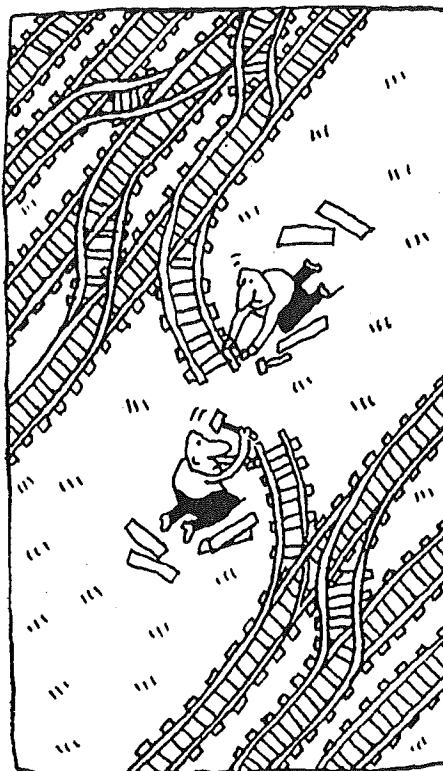
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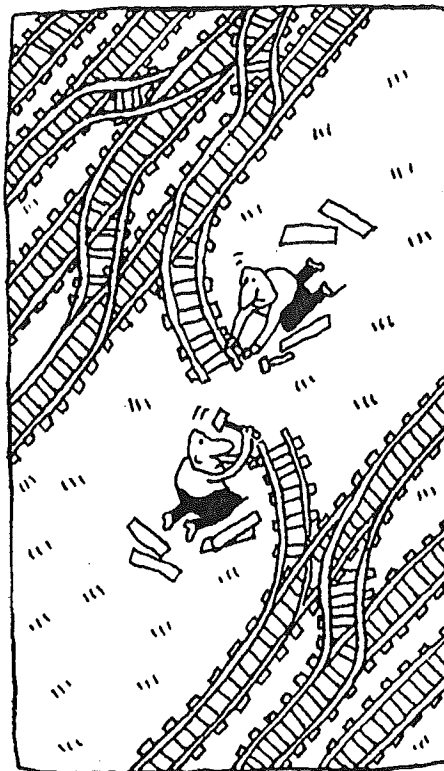
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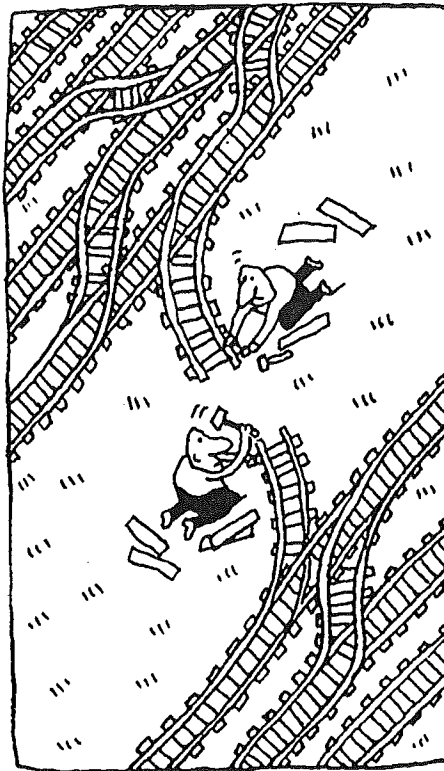
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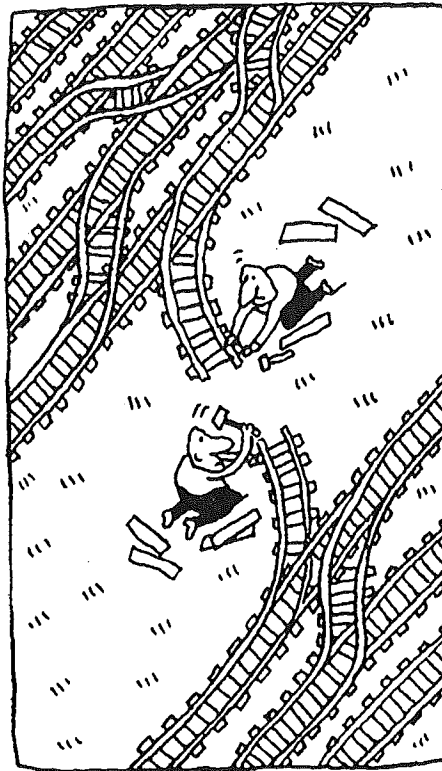
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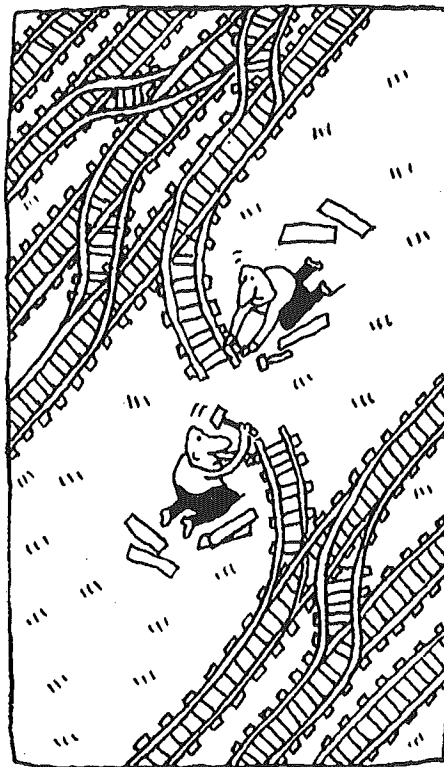
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The Executive Computer/John Markoff

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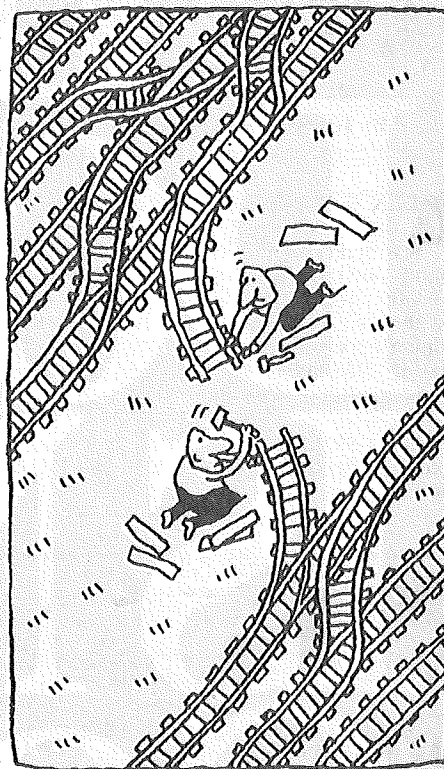
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